

25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

25X1A

**INFORMATION REPORT**

CD NO.

COUNTRY USSR

DATE DISTR. 21 May 1951

SUBJECT Treatment of US Ship Captain by Soviet Officials/  
Observations on Conditions in Soviet Ports

NO. OF PAGES 2

PLACE ACQUIRED [REDACTED]

NO. OF ENCLS.  
(LISTED BELOW)

25X1A

DATE ACQUIRED [REDACTED]

SUPPLEMENT TO  
REPORT NO.

DATE OF INFORMATION

25X1X

25X1X 1. [REDACTED]

25X1X we came into the harbor area of Novorossiysk, all of our binoculars, cameras and firearms were immediately put under seal by the boarding officials. The radio was also sealed. We stayed anchored out in the stream for four days prior to being allowed to go alongside the dock to unload. If I had not remonstrated with the authorities over the treatment we were getting, we would have stayed out in the stream for a much longer time. In any event, there was no special interrogation [REDACTED] by the Soviets, and my crew and myself were allowed to go ashore.

2. There was very little to do and practically no place to go, and none of the crew, 25X1X left the ship except once out of curiosity. I confined my excursions ashore to visits to the agent's office, etc. The steamship agent with whom I dealt was a Soviet named Gerasimof who was, by his own admission, an NKVD agent. The steamship agency was called IMFLOT. Gerasimof, who has a hate-lip, is about 37 years old, and is a disgruntled, neurotic, died-in-the-wool Communist. In the course of our several conversations, Gerasimof said to me that 25X1X he knows [REDACTED] still have negro slaves in the US, [REDACTED] told him he was suffering from an overdose of Soviet propaganda. It was at this point that he cautioned me that I would have to be careful of what I said because he was an intelligence agent.

3. Our ship was subjected to an exhaustive search, both upon arrival and departure. Everybody on board was locked in one room while the authorities searched every nook and corner of the ship. This took about two hours on both occasions. They searched everything, including the pockets of our clothes which were hanging in lockers, etc. Additionally, everytime that one of us left the ship, the Soviet guards alongside would scrutinize us for about 10 minutes in stony silence despite the fact we had landing passes. This was probably because the guards could not read or write and did not want to admit it. This same scrutiny was directed towards their own people who were working on the ship, i.e., trimmers, stevedores, etc. I noticed that one Soviet girl, who was scooping up grain from the deck with her hands and who had to go ashore each time she accumulated a full sack, was stopped each time by the guard. This was every 20 minutes during a 10-hour working day.

25X1

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

STATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NAVY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NSRB	DISTRIBUTION				
ARMY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AIR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FBI					

CONFIDENTIAL

25X1

- 2 -

This was certainly one of the reasons why our crew members did not go ashore more often. They were nervous and apprehensive as to what might happen to them.

4. Another fairly significant restriction was the fact they would allow us to make no soundings. As you know, when you load a ship, you have to be sure you are not taking on so much dead weight that you will ground it on the way out. The mate started to make soundings with a sounding line while we were tied up at the dock but was immediately stopped by the guard who pointed his gun at him, and would, I am sure, have shot him if he had not stopped immediately. When I explained the necessity for such information, I was told that the Harbor Master would make it available. However, when I called the Harbor Master I was told abruptly that it was not possible to give me that information.
5. The pilots in the area I found to be very talkative when we were alone. The one who took us into Novorossisk complained to me bitterly that he was made to act in such a capacity, because he had once owned several ships himself. He was obviously not a Party member. One or two of the pilots would not even accept a cup of coffee from us because of criticism which might be leveled at them. The same one who had been a ship owner was having a bite to eat in the wardroom with me one day when Gerasimof's secretary came in and scornfully and quite sincerely accused him of being a capitalist simply because he was having coffee and cookies with me.
6. Since our binoculars had been taken away from us, it was a little difficult for us to see what was going on around us. The whole area was very drab and depressing, however, and the people the most poverty-stricken I have ever seen.
7. In Novorossisk there was a cement plant in operation which was going full blast. There were barracks for persons who were being forced to work there. Whether or not they were prisoners of war or Soviet nationals, I could not determine.
8. In Poti, the only things which I saw of any interest were two old submarines and two mine sweepers in the Navy yard.

- end -

CONFIDENTIAL

25X1